A
LETTER
TO THE
DIRECTORS
OF THE HONORABLE
EAST-INDIA COMPANY,

In consequence of that most extraordinary Event,

THE RECALL OF

GOVERNOR GENERAL SIR GEORGE HILARO BARLOW, BART.

"Ingratitude is a vice of the deepeſt dye."

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BY JOHN ABRAHAM, CLEMENT'S LANE.

MESSRS DIRECTORS,

IT is my deſign, in this letter, to reply to ſome *modeſt* queries, addreſſed to me lately by " A City Elder,"—through that ſpirited and conſtitutional public paper, called the " Independent Whig." Theſe queries were relative to the " whole truth," at that epocha, when the Earl of Lauderdale (lately created a Britiſh Baron) was a candidate, along with me, for the Shrievalty of London and Middleſex.

It urges me to expreſs my regret, that that junction with his Lordſhip ſhould have diminiſhed the eſteem and confidence which my political ſentiments had auſpiciouſly eſtabliſhed. In that buſineſs, however, I was not poſſeſſed of the actual object of his Lordſhip's deſign. He was invited and brought into the City by Mr. Alderman Combe, who kindly attached him to my popularity; a meaſure to which, at an unwiſe moment, I gave aſſent, and thus heaped upon myſelf an odium that, properly, was not my due. The whole arrangement, ſirs, was one of the many beautiful irradiations of that Club, denominated by miſnomer "the Whig-Club of England," but (however we may highly reſpect individuals, moſt truly unfortunate for Britons and for freedom) is devoid of every requiſite but the name. Its three-fold magic embraces and deludes the honeſt and independent without doors; charms and faſcinates thoſe within, not of the ſanctorum; and, with the higheſt ranks and diſtinction of the

realm,

realm, alſo holds deep and ſweet converſe, whether it be with powers before, or whether it be, behind the throne.

Every witling politician ought to have known, that this Club was inſtituted under the impoſing branches of a Whig influence, at a tavern, in St. Martin's Lane, ſolely for the purpoſe of ſecuring the election of Mr. Fox for Weſtminſter: and, on my conſcience, if one political operation in Europe was *moſt* fatal to that expanſion of the mind, to that additional conſolation which progreſſive knowledge has intitled man to, it was the *hypocriſy*, the tergiverſation, the ſeceſſion, the dereliction, of its members, whenever the ſyren voice of venality or of power preſented a ſeductive charm. Its principles, I ſay, were founded on hypocriſy, than which nothing is more baleful. And my obſervation will, I fear, be amply and lamentably confirmed by the public actions of its chiefs, now enliſted into the phalanx and tinſelled by the arm of authority. It cannot

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be otherwiſe with the conductors of the Whig-Club of England. I had many fatal proofs of a total want of diſintereſted patriotiſm in its internal organization. In my motion there, " that thoſe who were of the Parliament ſhould no longer ſecede, but attend their duty or reſign, and aſk the opinion of conſtituents," I was defeated and inſulted. But when, deeply impreſſed with impending circumſtances, combined with this Club's honor and very exiſtence, and moſt anxious to aſcertain the depth of the political wound,—and when I preſented that political ordeal, and gave notice of the celebrated motion, " that the principles of the Whig Revolution of 1688, imperiouſly demanded that ſuch members as had given evidence on the trials of O'Connor, &c. ſhould be required to render ſome account of their paſt political connection with O'Connor, &c." —when I ſay, that I was perſonably ſought after, at my own houſe, and ſolicited by men now dignified with the higheſt legal honors,

both

both here and in India, not to urge this meaſure,—I had then no longer any doubts but that the machinery of this wonderful theatre of mock-patriotiſm and of ſtupid inebriety was chiefly applicable to the purpoſe of ouſting miniſters, no matter by what means, and by what connexions, and that it was alſo a deluſive rallying-point for thoſe who view the ſurface only, and a ſham reſervoir for the claims of oppreſſion, or for the calls of actual philanthropy. Although I might not give Sir James Mackintoſh, Alderman Combe, or Mr. Erſkine, my "motives" for this unexpected ſtep, it muſt be obvious, that my motion tended to aſcertain, *whether the Iriſh Reformers were ſupported, bona fide, by the Engliſh Oppoſitioniſts; if ſo, the evidences were as criminal as the culprits at the bar: or, if they did not ſincerely ſuſtain the Reformers, their hypocriſy to them demanded the deteſtation of all good citizens: and* (if the reader chooſes, in the only poſſible exception) *whether, if deluded by the Re-*

formers,

formers, men of ſuch ſhallow perceptions were qualified to be the future prime adviſers of the Crown of the United Kingdom, and the protectors of the country's weal?—I feel confident. and I ſpeak boldly.

If I had doubts on this critical concluſion, (I wiſh it were poſſible) my premiſes would be ſuſtained by a reference to the important data in the Iriſh confeſſions; by the alarm and the anxiety which the buſineſs excited in the Club; urging its members, before the trials, even to the reſearch of the Kent poll-books for the laſt fifty years; and by ſubſequent events, among which, that of Earl Thanet's ſubmitting, with Roman heroiſm, to a puniſhment *for blows given in Court by a Commoner*, is indeed the moſt worthy of record. But theſe matters never met the public eye; they were unworthy of the Club's recording-committee, and of public papers. I humbly truſt, however, that my patriotiſm on that ſingular event was of "better times;" and

I beg

I beg that it may be admitted as a counter-balance for introducing a nobleman for civic honors. But, when the public ſends his Lordſhip to India for the purpoſe of ſupplanting that experienced and pacific ſervant of the Company, Sir George Barlow, we muſt alike tremble for the baneful continuation of party and of cabal. It may be preſumed, however, that your honorable Court will perſevere in that ſtubborn independence which they have lately diſplayed upon the application made by the Board of Controul, in the very face of the Governor General's moſt elegant and gratifying deſpatch inſerted in a Gazette Extraordinary.

Thus far had I committed myſelf to the public eye, reſerving only, (at future periods,) to dilate and to expoſe, to good patriots, the arrant folly of attaching ideas of *amor patriæ* to that political Club which I have thus denounced. When, in common with all the thinking world, I am imperiouſly led to proceed by the following apparently-*authentic* intel-

ligence in all the public papers:—"*Mr. Secretary Fox has had a private audience with the King, and his Majeſty was induced to conſent by his ſign manual, agreably to the Reſtrictive Act of* 1793, *to recall Gov. Gen. Sir George Barlow, and a meſſage to this effect has been tranſmitted to the Court of Directors.*"

I muſt reſume the ſubject, but I fear that it will be difficult for you to remove the film of prejudice. You have been accoſted generally by partizans, or by intereſted courtiers: It will, however, I hope, prove a uſeful variety,—one independent man is worth a thouſand hirelings. I will firſt recapitulate the late proceedings, premiſing, that for the laſt three months the public papers have diſguſted the reader, with paragraphs *evidently paid for*, preparing him for ſuch a recall, and for the *bleſſings* to be derived from his ſucceſſor, the Earl of Lauderdale; I do not mean to detract from his Lordſhip's talents, they are certainly reſpectable, altho' it muſt be obvious, that the financial data of his Lordſhip, of Sir

Sir John Sinclair, and of Lord Sheffield, were drawn from the more profound works of Mr. William Morgan, nephew of Dr. Price.

The Court of Proprietors, tremblingly alive to every thing from Mr. Secretary Fox, held an eſpecial court on the 25th of May, relative to the conduct of the Directors during the adminiſtration of Marquis Welleſley. Their laudable and grateful reſolution was ſubmitted to a ballot, and is as follows:

"That this Court (of Proprietors,) having conſidered the papers laid before it, moſt highly approves of the zeal manifeſted, and the conduct purſued, by the Court of Directors, and regards *a firm adherence to the principles maintained by the Court of Directors, to be indiſpenſably neceſſary to preſerve the ſalutary authority over the government of India, veſted by law in the Court of Directors*; to reſtrain a profuſe expenditure of public money; and to prevent all ſchemes of conqueſt

and extenſion of dominion; meaſures, which the legiſlature has declared to be repugnant to the wiſh, the honor, and the policy, of the nation; and this Court *doth aſſure the Court of Directors of its moſt cordial and zealous ſupport, with a view to preſerve unimpaired the rights and privileges of the Eaſt India Company.*"

"London, 25th of May, 1806."

Carried by 928 againſt 195.—Majority 733.

The Honorable Court of Directors alſo met, upon the requiſition from the Board of Controul, or rather from the above Secretary, and againſt the recall of the Gov. General, and appointment of the Earl of Lauderdale, *to their eternal honor*, divided, 18 againſt 4 Directors. Moſt happily for Sir George Hilaro Barlow, the following Gazette Extraordinary, *unfortunately* for *Mr. Fox and his friends*, conſoled the friend of India and philanthropy:

Deſpatch

Despatch from Sir George Hilaro Barlow.

London Gazette Extraordinary, May 16.

Illahabad, 4th Dec. 1805.

I have now the honor to inform your Hon. Court, that on the 22d ult. a definitive treaty was concluded between the Rt. Hon. Lord Lake and the Plenipotentiary Agent of Dowlah Row Scindiah, upon terms which appear to me to be calculated to eftablifh the relations of amity and concord between the two States upon the moft fecure and permanent foundation.

Your Hon. Court will alfo have the fatisfaction to be apprifed of the expectation which I confidently entertain of a fpeedy and favourable termination of hoftilities with Jufwunt Row Holkar, and of the confequent important reduction of the military charges of the feveral prefidencies infeparable from a ftate of war.

I have

I have the satisfaction to inform your Hon. Court, that *perfect tranquillity prevails in every quarter of the Company's dominions*; and I am not aware of the probability of any occurrence of a nature calculated to disturb it, or to impair the fundamental sources of the British power and prosperity in India.

Despatches have also been received from Sir George H. Barlow, dated Illahabad, 24th of December, 1805, from which it appears, that, in consequence of the treaty of peace with Scindiah and the confident expectation of a peace with Holkar, orders had been issued for troops to return, agreeably to a peace-establishment."

After the candid reader has, along with you, well contemplated this modest decisive letter, from the Saviour of India, and in a British Gazette Extraordinary, is it [illegible], is it not the highth of wanton ingratitude, to urge the Directors, to advise his "most gracious" Majesty, to recall the Gov. General, and thus requite *evil* for *good*? —We must, however, trace this business to

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its source, I must go back to the notorious India-Bill of Mr. Fox,—and I fear that I must *now* spare him upon this his second preposterous coalition, with men "who had ruined "their country, and worthy only of condign "punishment." I must premise, that it is my chief design to arouse the Company from their lethargy, by proving, in this hasty production, that the *sine qua non* of the successive Ministers of this country for 30 years past, was to increase the already immense power of the Crown, by *an uncontrolled ascendency over the territories and inexhaustible wealth of Hindostan.* In 1783 (I might have gone farther back) we find the Lord Advocate of Scotland, (Mr. Henry Dundas, now Viscount Melville,)—in the House of Commons, thus prefacing his motion for the recall of the most judicious and most succesful *(next to* Sir George Barlow) Governor-General, that ever your Court heard of,—I mean that persecuted man, Warren Hastings, Esq. "The Court of Directors, sensible of the "wrongs which were committed, sent out

"instruc-

" inſtructions, but theſe were generally diſ-
" regarded, and *were often injudicious*" He therefore ſhould propoſe Lord Cornwallis, whoſe *birth*, whoſe *rank*, whoſe military prowefs, would unite the moſt deſirable requiſites." Mark, Meſſrs Directors of a trading community,—" military requiſites." Mr. Burke was alſo moſt vehement for this meaſure. Poſterity will know, however, that this orator's zeal, in Warren Haſtings's matters, aroſe from ſlights to his relative in India. Lord John Cavendiſh declared, " that the territorial acquiſitions, of the Company, were but a fruitful ſource of grievance,"—" let it confine itſelf to the *Charter of Merchants*."—Governor Johnſtone manfully oppoſed the meaſure; " France had ſent out formidable ſquadrons; —France had an eye to India;—and would you recall the Governor-General when he has juſt concluded peace with the Mahrattas, and has ſupplied the expenſes of the late war with wonderful ingenuity?" Mr. Dempſter, on the ſame ſide, ſaid, that, to ſuperſede Mr. Haſtings,

Haftings, would be like recalling Governor Elliot, when hot balls were flying at Gibraltar.

The whole bufinefs ended here, *the Bill was loft.* But, in November of that year, Mr. Secretary Fox, *true to the latent principle,* brought forward his " celebrated" Bill for the purpofe of " relieving" the company from the burden of *directing their own affairs*, by an inveftment of their powers in feven commiffioners, (of which, I think, Earl Fitzwilliam is now only living,) " for the benefit of the proprietors and of the public." My mercantile affairs are in confufion, I am incapable of farther conducting them, and my creditors (the public through their reprefentatives) kindly take them out of my hands, and veft them in thofe of Earl Fitzwilliam and fix others; *this* is the cafe in plain Englifh.—Mr. Fox, who had fcarcely taken his feat as a Minifter, declared " that " it was impoffible for a fubject of greater *dignity and weight* to be under the infpec-

tion of a Britiſh Parliament; it involved the beſt intereſts, if ſuch be the denomination we chooſe to beſtow upon the *ſources of commerce and opulence of the empire.* It was intimately connected with the honor and fair fame of the Engliſh nation; and, which was of a thouſand times more importance, it was to give a colour to the fate and the happineſs of thirty millions of men! The patronage and wealth of India might prove a permanent ſource of *influence and corruption*; and, *placed implicitly in* WRONG HANDS, they might overturn that balance of the conſtitution, which we have been habituated to view with ſo fond an admiration, and give a new face to the government of theſe iſlands!! Whatever may be Mr. Haſtings's *demerits*, he is a man of a very different ſtamp from the *herd* of our late Governors of India. The reſolution of the houſe to recall an Aſiatic Governor *had been diſobeyed, and a vote of thanks ſubſtituted by the Court of Proprietors.*" This is but an outline of Mr. Fox's ſpeech. His Bill,

while

while it preferved the monopoly, and left untouched the queftion of the territorial right, propofed no lefs than to take, from the Proprietors and the Directors, the *entire* adminiftration of their territorial and commercial affairs. It took from them their houfe in Leadenhall-ftreet, together with all their books, papers, and documents, vefting the entire management, the appointment of all officers and fervants, the rights of peace and war, and the difpofal of the whole revenue, in the hands of thefe feven commiffioners. They were *firft* to be chofen by the legiflature,—*afterwards* by the crown,—and to hold their offices, as the Judges of England, only removable by an addrefs from a houfe of Parliament. " This bufinefs *forced itfelf upon him and the nation*: he came forward with no other reafon on earth than becaufe the neceffity was fo urgent;—*its preffure fo irrefiftible* that *no farther delay could be admitted*; they (the Company) now want a loan of half a million; they are drawn upon for two more:—*fhall*

 they

their bills be dishonored? Good man! how delighted will the close hunks and gabies be with this extract. " The Directors had acquiesced in the recall of Mr. Hastings, but the Court of Proprietors had rescinded the vote, and had voted him their thanks for his conduct." The opposition, in reply, declared that " *every thing* had been expected of Mr. Fox, but the measure of that day augured the fatal effects of his junction with Lord North. *It was impossible that he could ever be hereafter trusted as the Minister of this country.*" Mr. Pitt (for whom Mr. Fox is now paving a splendid mausoleum) declared, that, " by this Bill, the *annihilation of the charter of the Company*, and a *new and unconstitutional influence*, was created. The Bill attacked the most solemn charters. It was a *fair purchase made* of *the public*, an *equal compact*. Pass this Bill, what assurance had we for the great charter itself? Every thing was to be given up. *Imagination was at a loss to guess at the most insignificant trifle which had escaped the harp-yclaws* of a RAVENOUS coalition.

coalition. Did Mr. Fox wiſh to be a dictator and be crowned? I will hold no compariſons with Cromwells, Cæſars, and Catilines! In oppoſition, he has declared that the influence of the crown was enormous;—he would render the crown every thing." Mr. Henry Dundas, "he has out-heroded Herod." The bill, however, was ſtrenuouſly ſupported by Mr. Erſkine, now High Chancellor Lord Erſkine; Mr. Courtenay, now a Treaſury-Lord; by Lord Rawdon, now Earl Moira, Maſter-General of the Ordnance; and by Lord Maitland, now Earl of Lauderdale, and, they ſay, Goveror-General of India. It was oppoſed by Mr. Wilberforce alſo, and carried by a ſmall majority; it was petitioned againſt by both the Court of Proprietors and by the Directors.

In the upper houſe, Earl Temple and Lord Thurlow manfully oppoſed it, and it was there rejected 95 to 76. This terminated Mr. Fox's bill, and his coalition with Lord North. It cannot however be diſguiſed, that,

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in the bill of Mr. Pitt, which ensued, and which was lost by a majority of 8, the same design of wresting the affairs of India out of the hands of the *sole Proprietors*, and of attacking its inexhaustible resources, and incalculable patronage and power, was the true basis and foundation.

The Company, alive to its interests,—the nation at large also,—however individually venal, not lost in shameless dishonour, would not allow even their then favorite, the son of a Chatham, to prostitute *the nation's honor, the solemnity of a chartered right*, at the shrine of *ambition* or of *theoretical speculation*.—They were aware, no doubt, that the *sole principle* of that contract, between the Government and the Company, was a commercial principle;—and that such principle, whenever deviated from, either by the mad ambition of governors, like Clive, or like Wellesley, or by the machinations of the British Ministers, *only* had produced those enormous expenses and calamities, which are

are ſo truly deplored by the real friends of the Company, yet, ſo highly acceptable to thoſe miniſters and politicians as are actuated by a *thirſt for Aſiatic power and arbitrary ſway.*

My poſition, that the ſole power of India is the object, is confirmed by the act of Mr. Pitt, ſome years afterwards,—the eſtabliſhment of the Board of Controul over the actions of the Court of Directors; and alſo by the recent declarations made by miniſters or *their dependents* in the Houſe of Commons; that "this Controul, and this Court of Directors, are incongruous;—that ſome more ſimple plan of conducting India affairs muſt ſooner or later be deviſed." To which, however, Mr. Francis appears adverſe. He is, of all men in Europe, beſt informed on India affairs, and *I hope* that he will copy Mr. Paull in his diſintereſtedneſs, and *that he is not fallen* into the pernicious and deſtructive wiles of the preſent adminiſtration, relative to that devoted quarter of the globe.—It is a pity but we could

could ſtudy *what* originally eſtabliſhed Indian proſperity,—and even our own, or that of every other rational people, where commerce has extended its tranquil wing. *It was honorable engagements, not the ſword;—it was commerce, uncontrolled by power.*—From the earlieſt ages, the expanſion of commerce has been in due relation to the influence of power:—Egypt, Tyre, Rome, Carthage, Venice, Genoa, ſucceſſively ſunk into *arbitrary power*, poverty, and rags. In more modern ages, Portugal, Holland, England, America, and France, have made their progreſſive or retrograde march in the civiliſed arts of manufactory and commerce, as their reſpective people were more or leſs ponderous in the ſcale of government. It is becauſe that *freedom is the very ſoul of commerce*; it cannot even ſuffer the "controul" of a *Maximum* or a *Minimum* upon a ſingle production; for, at the moſt enlightened period of our own hiſtory, when party and cabal had not reached their climax,—I mean the beginning of this reign, all reſtrictive acts

upon

upon the freedom of commerce, were removed by a ſweeping repeal of Parliament, "as they had prevented a free trade, and only tended to advance prices."

In our own time we witneſs, the vain and blighting efforts making by the arbitrary governments of Pruſſia and Ruſſia, or of Sweden, to become manufacturers; they will ſoon diſcover, that a reſtriction of ſpeech and of communication, an inſecurity of property, are inſurmountable obſtacles.—In this country even, we are by our warlike habits, endangering thoſe genial ſources of comfort, of which we have been the envy and admiration, and the day is not far diſtant, when it will be a queſtion, whether we muſt re-trace our ſteps, or again immerge into a military government.

The India Company has before it a labyrinth of difficulties. If Marquis Wellesley had been deputed to have laid you proſtrate at the feet of the throne, it muſt be admitted, that he has aſſiduouſly employed himſelf. A

debt of eleven increafed to thirty-two millions! and all by what? *by meafures diametrically oppofite* to the *eftablifhed pacific commercial defenfive principles, upon which the Company's charters were founded, and by which it had originally profpered.*—But like Mr. Paull, to whom the country is infinitely indebted, I may be told, that I fpeak " at my peril"—On this point, however, I am at iffue with Mr. Fox and his colleagues. Mr. Fox may enter the royal prefence and advife the King to give his fign manual for the recall of a Governor General, but this will not do away the indelible ftain of ingratitude for *fignal fervices*; it will not replace the *ftimulus to laudable public fervices*; when we find that in this cafe, as with Sir David Baird and Commodore Popham, party, not public virtue, *a filly promife to a dependant*, are the motives which actuate this champion of his country's rights!

If reforms in India are wanting; and where does not the imperfectibility of man demand

reform

reform; let them be made through their lawful and natural channel, through the Directors, and through ſuch men as Barlow or of Francis, whoſe natural lives even have been contracted by local experience; and let us hear no more of the nomination of ſtrangers to India's gigantic operations. Let Mr. Fox and his new friends ſtand fair, if they can, with the nation—let them not on every occaſion avoid the introduction of papers. After the reſolution of the Court of Proprietors, it is the bounden duty of Mr. Fox, to fathom the buſineſs of Marquis Wellesley; or, has he gone "accorde" with my Lord Grenville, "OBLIVION UPON THE PAST?" Are we to barter our 40s. Freeholders for Parliamentary Reform? a 10 per cent. in lieu of 6l Property Tax? an increaſed ſtanding Army for the new modelling of the old conſtitutional force, the Militia? an exciſeman in every private brewhouſe for the "Shop Tax?" the American Intercourſe bill, for the navigation

 act?

act? But let it not be said that Mr. Fox's principles relative to freedom and to *control over the public expenditure*, shall be first exposed and ridiculed, shall be first brought to *the shrine of derision*, when he has arrived at the highth of power, and that "control" shall only appear, when Indian government is to be wrested from its rightful possessors.— Let us not see realized, that ominous HEARSAY* of the last three years, that "*the expenses of this war*, and of future ones, would be derivable from India." There was a time (vide Parliamentary Register) when Mr. Fox had objections to this Board of control—and when he viewed it with jealousy—and when Mr. Francis's speech, 5th of April, 1806, censuring Marquis Wellesley for the carnatic war, "was completely unanswerable." Has Mr. Fox no leisure to look into his own palpable inconsistencies— Does he suppose that there is a child ignorant—that his protege's (Lord H. Petty) bill

* All Mr. Burke's solemn truths were conveyed by a "Hearsay."

Bill for the appointment of commiſſioners to audit public accounts, amounting to nearly five hundred millions, is a great libel on his worthy coadjutor, Lord Grenville, who as auditor for life (and alſo Firſt Lord of the Treaſury) has enjoyed a moſt ſplendid annuity, *for not paſſing ſuch accounts?*

But I humbly truſt, that I have already ſufficiently attracted your attention to the alarming poſition in which his Majeſty's new Miniſters would place you. If, however, unfortunately you ſhould not arouſe, and aſſert your independency, in which you will be cordially ſupported by the virtuous community—I pledge myſelf that the period is not diſtant, when theſe their plans will be found to be a veritable baſis for the *unity of the united kingdom with Hindoſtan*—and that the talents and profound ingenuity of the Earl of Lauderdale, will have been only *preliminary* and *ſubſervient to a more powerful, definitive,*

and

and exclusive system of dominion, under the *benign sway of a far more illustrious personage than any which your Honorable Court has ever beheld among the past Governors-General of India.*

S. F. WADDINGTON.

6th June, 1806.

JOHN ABRAHAM, PRINTER, CLEMENT'S LANE